

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) The compound or salt thereof as claimed in Claim 24, wherein said compound represented by Formula (1) is D-1-naphthylalanyl-Arg-LeuNH₂, D-2-naphthylalanyl-Arg-LeuNH₂, L-1-naphthylalanyl-Arg-LeuNH₂ or L-2-naphthylalanyl-Arg-LeuNH₂.

4. – 19. (Canceled)

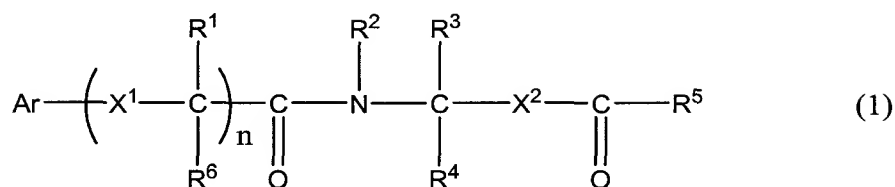
20. (Previously Presented) The compound or salt thereof as claimed in Claim 3, wherein said compound represented by Formula (1) is D-1-naphthylalanyl-Arg-LeuNH₂.

21. (Previously Presented) The compound or salt thereof as claimed in Claim 3, wherein said compound represented by Formula (1) is D-2-naphthylalanyl-Arg-LeuNH₂.

22. (Previously Presented) The compound or salt thereof as claimed in Claim 3, wherein said compound represented by Formula (1) is L-1-naphthylalanyl-Arg-LeuNH₂.

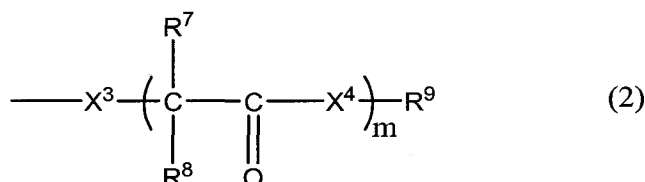
23. (Previously Presented) The compound or salt thereof as claimed in Claim 3, wherein said compound represented by Formula (1) is L-2-naphthylalanyl-Arg-LeuNH₂.

24. (Currently Amended) A compound represented by the following Formula (1) or a salt thereof



wherein

R⁵ represents a group represented by the following Formula (2),



wherein m is 1 and:

Ar represents ~~a-unsubstituted~~ an unsubstituted naphthyl group ~~or a substituted naphthyl group having one or more substituents,~~

R¹, R² and R³ each represent independently a hydrogen atom, an unsubstituted straight-chain alkyl group having 1 to 6 carbon atoms, an unsubstituted branched-chain alkyl group having 1 to 6 carbon atoms,

R⁴ represents an unsubstituted basic amino acid side chain,

X¹ is an unsubstituted alkylene group having 1 to 6 carbon atoms,

X² is a single bond,

R⁶ represents a hydrogen atom or -NHY, wherein Y represents a hydrogen atom, an acyl group having 2 to 22 carbon atoms, an alkyl group having 1 to 22 carbon atoms, a hydroxyalkyl group having 1 to 22 carbon atoms, or a 3-alkoxy-2-hydroxypropyl group wherein the alkoxyl group has 1 to 22 carbon atoms,

n is 1,

X³ represents -NR¹⁰-,

X⁴ represents -O- or -NR¹¹-,

R^7 represents a side chain of an amino acid having a hydrophobic side chain selected from the group consisting of valine, norvaline, leucine, norleucine, isoleucine, phenylalanine, phenylglycine, threonine, and tryptophan,
 R^8 , R^{10} , and R^{11} each represent independently a hydrogen atom or a straight-chain or branched-chain alkyl group having 1 to 6 carbon atoms,
 R^9 represents a hydrogen atom, an acyl group having 2 to 22 carbon atoms, or an alkyl group having 1 to 22 carbon atoms.

25. (Previously Presented) The compound or salt thereof as claimed in Claim 24,
wherein

Ar of Formula (1) represents a 1-naphthyl group or a 2-naphthyl group,
 R^1 , R^2 and R^3 of Formula (1) each represent a hydrogen atom,
 R^4 of Formula (1) represents an unsubstituted basic amino acid side chain having an amino group or a guanidino group,
 X^1 of Formula (1) is a methylene group,
 R^6 of Formula (1) represents -NHY, wherein Y represents a hydrogen atom, an acyl group having 2 to 22 carbon atoms, an alkyl group having 1 to 22 carbon atoms, a hydroxyalkyl group having 1 to 22 carbon atoms, or a 3-alkoxy-2-hydroxypropyl group wherein the alkoxyl group has 1 to 22 carbon atoms,

wherein

X^3 of Formula (2) represents -NH-,
 X^4 of Formula (2) represents -O- or -NH-,
 R^7 of formula (2) represents a side chain of a neutral amino acid having a hydrophobic side chain selected from the group consisting of valine,

norvaline, leucine, norleucine, isoleucine, phenylalanine, phenylglycine, and threonine,

R⁸ of Formula (2) represents a hydrogen atom,

R⁹ of Formula (2) represents a hydrogen atom, an acyl group having 2 to 22 carbon atoms, or an alkyl group having 1 to 22 carbon atoms.

26. (Previously Presented) A melanocyte-stimulating hormone inhibitory composition which comprises, as an active ingredient, at least one compound or salt thereof as claimed in Claim 24, and a cosmetically acceptable carrier.

27. (Previously Presented) A melanocyte-stimulating hormone inhibitory composition which comprises, as an active ingredient, a compound or salt thereof as claimed in Claim 24 that exhibits a 50% inhibitory concentration of cAMP production (IC₅₀) of 100 nM or less, and a cosmetically acceptable carrier.

28. (Previously Presented) The melanocyte-stimulating hormone inhibitory composition as claimed in Claim 27, wherein said composition is an inhibitor of pigmentation by ultraviolet rays.

29. (Previously Presented) The melanocyte-stimulating hormone inhibitory composition as claimed in Claim 27, wherein said melanocyte-stimulating hormone inhibitory compound has a molecular weight of 800 or less.

30. (Previously Presented) A method of whitening which comprises, contacting an object to be whitened with an effective amount of a whitening agent comprising as an active ingredient, at least one compound or salt thereof as claimed in Claim 24, wherein said whitening agent is an inhibitor of pigmentation by ultraviolet rays.

31. – 32. (Canceled)

33. (Previously Presented) A cosmetic or external preparation for the skin which comprises, as an active ingredient, at least one compound or salt thereof as claimed in Claim 24 and a cosmetically acceptable carrier.

34. (Previously Presented) A method of whitening which comprises, contacting an object to be whitened with an effective amount of a whitening agent comprising as an active ingredient, at least one compound or salt thereof of the composition as claimed in Claim 27, wherein said whitening agent is an inhibitor of pigmentation by ultraviolet rays.

35. – 36. (Canceled)

37. (Previously Presented) A cosmetic or external preparation for the skin which comprises, as an active ingredient, at least one compound or salt thereof as claimed in Claim 27 and a cosmetically acceptable carrier.

38. (Previously Presented) A whitening agent which comprises, as an active ingredient, at least one compound or salt thereof of the composition as claimed in Claim 26

and a cosmetically acceptable carrier, wherein said whitening agent is an inhibitor of pigmentation by ultraviolet rays.

39. – 40. (Canceled)

41. (Previously Presented) A cosmetic or external preparation for the skin which comprises, as an active ingredient, at least one compound or salt thereof as claimed in Claim 26 and a cosmetically acceptable carrier.

42. (Previously Presented) A method of whitening which comprises, contacting an object to be whitened with an effective amount of a whitening agent comprising as an active ingredient, at least one compound or salt thereof of the composition as claimed in Claim 26, wherein said whitening agent is an inhibitor of pigmentation by ultraviolet rays.